

THE SWELLING TOAD.

Curious Points About This Oddity Among Animals.

The wonder of the genus batrachia and the greatest natural history oddity to be found along the Atlantic coast of the United States is the swelling toad, a semiaquatic creature known to naturalists as *Bufomachus*. It is occasionally met with from New York city to Jacksonville, Fla., but is most common along the coasts of Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina. When in its natural state the "swell toad" is about the size of a large bullfrog, but looks more like a fish than it does like either a frog or a toad. It is about six inches in length and has the curious faculty of being able to swell to the size of a football, in which state its legs, tail and head are scarcely visible.

Irritation appears to be the chief factor in causing these curious creatures to inhale air until they swell almost to bursting. The bellies of both the males and females are nearly pure white and are covered with spines which give that portion of their anatomy the appearance of a well ripened lemon burr. Persons who understand the "swell toad" and know what a terrible little rascal it is catch it and rub the spines on its belly, when it swells up until it is utterly helpless. Another curious point about the creature is that as long as it is kept on its back it is unable to expel the air so as to reduce the swelling.

HUMAN QUALITIES.

According to This Writer, Women Are More Civilized Than Men.

Havelock Ellis in his study of "the most interesting beings in the world"—namely, men and women—formulates the conclusions that there is hardly an organ of the body or quality of any kind that is not unlike in the sexes. A man is a man even to his thumbs, and a woman is a woman down to her little toes. Let man, with his vaunted superiority in everything, cultivate a deeper feeling of his real standing in view of Mr. Ellis' statement that women "are unquestionably superior in general tactile sensibility and probably superior in the discrimination of tastes," with (to be perfectly impartial) no advantage either way in the other senses, but they have better memories, read more rapidly, bear pain better, recover better from wounds and serious illnesses, are less changed by old age, live longer and have relatively larger brains, especially in the frontal regions. Women, to put it in a few words, are more civilized than men. On the other hand, Mr. Ellis finds men are slower in mind, with greater strength of body (they are two, three and four times as strong as women), quicker in movement, with much greater lung capacity, more blood corpuscles and exhale twice as much carbon dioxide, but these last qualities are rather drawbacks than otherwise, since men are less able to endure confinement and bad air.

Dartmouth University.

In a copy of the Portland Gazette published in 1817 there is an allusion to "Dartmouth university." Dartmouth college was founded by a charter granted before the Revolution, and the state of New Hampshire sought to take away the charter rights and use the property as a part of the new university, which was chartered by the legislature. The point was raised that the legislature had no right to do this, and it was so decided by the United States supreme court after a memorable exposition of the case by Daniel Webster. The Gazette pokes fun at the university, which, it states, "has one student," who "may serve as a meat egg."

A Singular Betrothal.

The way the Singalese and Tartar tribes have of popping the question is singular. The man sends and purchases the lady's wearing apparel. Of course if she does not like the gentleman she need not part with the contents of her wardrobe, but if he is the favored one she readily does so, knowing that when the evening comes they will be returned to her by the suitor in person. He spends the night beneath the same roof with her, and the next day, after a certain amount of feasting is gone through, the couple's thumbs are tied together, and thenceforward they are man and wife.

Chinese Deities.

The Chinaman has a deity who opens the eyes of his worshipers in the morning and another who closes them at night. He has gods of rising, standing, walking, running, crawling, swimming; gods of spitting, chewing, swallowing, sneezing, coughing, choking. There are gods who preside at the birth of a Chinese baby and gods who honor the occasion when a Chinaman dies, or, in his own idiom, "sticks up his pigtail."

A Dog's Life.

"I pity the poor sailor," said the sentimental boarder. "His is a dog's life." "Yes," rejoined the cheerful idiot, "he goes from one bark to another, as it were."—Columbus Dispatch.

DID YOU EVER WONDER—

Why a baby carriage isn't known as a crycycle?

Why it is so much easier to be wrong than it is to be president?

Why some people manage to talk a great deal without saying anything?

Why so many of our coming men seem to be handicapped from the start?

Why the company that issues the map has the only curveless railroad thereon?

Why the average man invariably makes a fool of himself every time he tries to act up?

Why men are nearly always embarrassed when they propose—either financially or otherwise?

Why so many men who are anxious to work when sick are just as anxious to avoid it when well?

Why some men are not as black as they are painted and some are not as white as they are whitewashed?—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Plain Clothes Men.

In a small South American state which had recently undergone a change of administration the new potentate summoned an artist and ordered new designs for all the official uniforms.

"I wish showy costumes—very showy," he said, "for the people are impressed by them. I have here some sketches that I myself have made. Look them over and be guided by these ideas as far as possible."

The artist examined the sketches carefully.

"This," he said, turning the pages, "is evidently for the navy and this for the army, but, if you please, what is this—a long plume on a three cornered hat, yellow dress coat trimmed with purple, and—"

"That," replied the chief of state gravely, "is for the secret police."

Be Kind Today.

Less spent on the dead and more spent on the living would bring about many happy results. Hearts are breaking, loved ones wait and tears flow all because of the withholding of kind words unspoken and letters never sent. The aged father and mother far off in the country would often be cheered did the son or daughter more frequently send them a letter. Behold the sad mistakes of others, their remorse, and profit by the same before it is too late. Today, now, speak the loving word, send the tender message, write the letter you put off day by day, and don't wait until you forget it or until bitter memories haunt you.

A Brazilian Household Pet.

Brazilians train a snake called the ghibla as a rat catcher. It is fifteen feet long, is harmless to the human being, becomes quite a household pet, is lazy in the daytime, but at night roams about the house in quest of its prey—rats. These animals it promptly kills by twisting their necks. When Brazilians have to pass from room to room in the dark they first put on their slippers. It would not be pleasant to plant one's bare feet on a cold slimy snake of that size.

Cutting Off the Nose.

In some parts of the world, especially Italy and India, it has been customary to employ removal of the nose as a form of punishment, sometimes judicial, but chiefly as a mode of carrying out private revenge. Especially in some districts of India it is considered a suitable form of punishment for a husband to inflict on a wife whose conduct he does not approve. Among the Romans this penalty was not at all rarely inflicted both by the law and by private animosity.

Indian Twins.

Indian twins are a great curiosity, for it is said that Indians never permit twins to live. Twins, in their belief, are heralds of impending evil, for a great many years ago the abduction of beautiful twin daughters by members of a distant tribe was the cause of war and great loss of life. Hence, probably, originated the practice of killing Indian twins as soon as they are born.

Did His Best.

She—After six weeks of married life, Arthur, I have reached the sad certainty that you do not love me. Arthur—My dear! She—it's no use protesting. You should have married some credulous, stupid girl! Arthur—Well, darling, I did my very best.

Just a Loan.

"Don't beg; the world owes you a living," said the prosperous citizen to the mendicant. But he was staggered by the reply:

"All right, sir; lend me a trifle till it pays up."—New York Herald.

His Anxious Query.

Young Wife—I don't like that cooking school teacher at all. She has neither patience nor consideration. She's actually cruel! Husband—Great snakes! She doesn't really make you eat the things, does she?

True goodness is like the glowworm in this, that it shines most when no eyes except heaven are upon it.—Hare.

How He Told Counterfeits.

"We have a man in this office," remarked one of the officials of the treasury department the other day, "who is without a peer anywhere in the country when it comes to spotting a counterfeit coin. His faculty for telling the spurious product has been developed to a remarkable degree. He gave an illustration of his skill the other day. On that table in the corner there were piled up a couple hundred half dollars. Apparently they were all sound and genuine specimens from the government mint. Our expert walked into the room, and, giving one glance at the pile of halves twenty-five feet distant, he quietly remarked:

"There's a counterfeit in that stack."

"He then stepped up to the table and pulled a coin from out of the middle of the pile. It was tested and found to be spurious. I asked the man to tell how he discovered the counterfeit.

"By the reflection of the light," he replied. 'The rays cast from that coin were wholly different from those sent out by the other pieces. That coin stood out as distinctly from the rest as a blood red poppy in a field of white flowers.'"—Washington Cor. Brooklyn Eagle.

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In one of the most fashionable restaurants in Paris a man's life was saved through the skill and quickness of one of the guests. It appears that a man, with three friends, was dining at one of the small tables when a piece of meat lodged in his throat and he found it impossible to get rid of it. His friends in alarm slapped him on the back, but the unfortunate man became black in the face and fell to the floor. A surgeon from the German hospital, who happened to be dining in the cafe, pushed his way through the crowd. He saw at once that the man was dying and that if prompt measures were not taken he would quickly succumb. He ordered one of the waiters to bring him a small funnel such as is used in bottling wine and then, without a moment's hesitation, took out a sharp knife, cut the man's throat, removed the piece of meat and the waiter having returned—quickly inserted the funnel in the opening. The man was then hastily conveyed to the hospital, where a silver tube was inserted in the place of the funnel, and a few hours later he was pronounced out of danger.

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